

17 January 1952

Mr. John Desmond
United States National Committee
International Press Institute
c/o THE NEW YORK TIMES
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Desmond:

I am chagrined to find that I have failed to acknowledge your inquiry to General Smith on Soviet press obstructions before shopping it through CIA for such assistance as we might provide. My oversight was an inadvertent and a most regrettable one.

Anyone engaged in the sometimes exasperating task of sifting fact on the Soviet can readily understand how difficult is the study you have undertaken. At the time of Mr. Goldstein's visit to Washington, I discussed the project at some length with him. And I reminded him at that time that, interested as we were in his project, we would probably find ourselves circumscribed by the rigid security limitations that of necessity apply to CIA. Not only must we exercise zealous care to avoid compromising confidential sources, but we are enjoined from divulging to anyone other than authorized persons such substantive intelligence as we may collect in the regular conduct of our business. Moreover, since his appointment as Director of CIA, General Smith has specifically avoided comment upon questions relating to problems which have now become matters of official concern.

In my initial checkthrough on Mr. Goldstein's questionnaire, I was advised that newspapermen with Moscow experience would probably provide more lucrative sources of information than any we might turn on on this subject. However, I'm sure you realized the enormous value of those sources at the outset, that you came to us only for such complementary information as we might provide. In the hope, therefore, of steering you to overt authorities outside CIA, I have queried our Soviet desks here for such guidance as they might suggest. I shall pass on their comments to you next Tuesday.

Sincerely,

C. B. Hansen
Colonel, USAF
Assistant to the Director